Australian Bureau of Statistics

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One in five part-time workers want more hours: ABS

One in five of Australia's part-time workers want and are available to work more hours than they currently do, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

In September 2008, the ABS found that there were 655,100 underemployed workers across Australia, of which the majority (92%) were underemployed part-time workers.

Underemployed workers are part-time workers who want and are available to work more hours than they usually do (603,700), and full-time workers working less than 35 hours a week due to economic reasons (such as being stood down or insufficient work)(51,300).

While there were more underemployed part-time women (389,800) than underemployed part-time men (213,900), the incidence of underemployment among part-time workers was higher for men (25%) than for women (18%).

Just over half (51%) of the underemployed part-time workers would prefer to work full-time hours (35 hours or more a week).

Less than half (45%) of the underemployed part-time workers took steps to find more hours of work. The most common steps included:

- 'asked current employer for more work' (61%);
- 'contacted prospective employers' (57%); and
- 'looked in newspapers' (52%).

Of these underemployed part-time workers who took steps to find more hours of work, the most common difficulty encountered by men and women was 'no vacancies in line of work' (17%). However, women were more likely than men to report 'unsuitable hours' as their main difficulty (13% compared with 6%).

Further details can be found in *Underemployed Workers, Australia, 2008* (cat. no. 6265.0), available free of charge from the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au>.

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